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MEETING TO: ADOPT RULES OF PROCEDURE AND STATEMENT OF POLICY FOR
PRIVATE IMMIGRATION BILLS AND STATEMENT OF POLICY ON FEDERAL CHARTERS

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

House of Representatives,
Subcommittee on Immigration
and Border Security,
Committee on the Judiciary,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 1:09 p.m., in Room 2141, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Trey Gowdy [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Gowdy, Labrador, Smith, King, Ratcliffe, Trott, and Lofgren.

Staff Present: George Fishman, Chief Counsel; Andrea Loving, Deputy Chief Counsel; Graham Owens, Professional Staff Member; and Tom Jawetz, Minority Chief Counsel.

Mr. Gowdy. This is the Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement. It's a meeting to adopt Rules and Procedures and Statement of Policy for private immigration bills.

Pursuant to notice, I now call up for consideration the Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security's Rules and Procedures and Statement of Policy for private immigration bills and the Policy on the Granting of Federal Charters.

I will recognize myself very briefly, and then my friend from California. The primary focus of these Rules is to establish the standard requirements for the consideration of private immigration bills, which are essentially requests to circumvent current law. Without these standards, the Congress could potentially be inundated with the requests for private bills.

The subcommittee will also consider adoption of the policy of not granting new Federal charters for private, not-for-profit organizations. This policy has been adopted by the subcommittee of jurisdiction since the 101st Congress, and it reflects the subcommittee's belief that charters are unnecessary for the operation of any charitable organization and imply to the public that an organization and its activities carry a congressional seal of approval.

This policy also reflects the subcommittee's belief significant resources required to properly investigate prospective chartered organizations and monitor them, could and should be spent instead on the subcommittee's larger range of policy matters.

These are essentially the same Rules and Statement of Policy that

have been adopted in past Congresses. Technical changes have been made to ensure that they are up to date. These Rules have served us well, and I would recommend that we adopt them in the 114th Congress.

And now I will recognize my friend from California, Ms. Lofgren.

Ms. Lofgren. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you do, I support the Rule of Procedure and Statement of Policy for the private immigration bills that I am sure we will adopt today. As you note, they are in change from what the subcommittee agreed to in the last Congress.

Several private immigration bills that will once more come before this subcommittee have already passed the House on multiple occasions. And I am hoping that you and I can engage with our friends in the Senate, as well as colleagues in the House, to see whether or not some of these measures that have been repeatedly approved might finally become law and if we could overcome some of the procedural problems that have occurred, not on our side of the building.

I agree with you on the issue of charters. That is a bipartisan policy. I would note, however, that in recent years a small number of new Federal charters have been authorized on the House floor without stopping in here to the subcommittee. And the subcommittee's jurisdiction is longstanding, and our opposition to such charters is bipartisan in nature and really based on sound reasoning.

So it is my view that additional House actions that could undermine or circumvent the policy we are adopting today should be discouraged as they are not in the best interest of the subcommittee,

Congress, or the Federal Government. And I look forward to working with you to make sure that this policy is adhered to throughout the Congress.

And with that, I yield back, recommending approval.

Mr. Gowdy. Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

Copies of the proposed Rules and Policy are before each member. Without objection, the Rules and Policy will be considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Are there any amendments?

Since there are no amendments, the question is on adopting the Rules of Procedure and Statement of Policy for Private Immigration Bills and the Policy on the Granting of Federal Charters. Those in favor will signify by saying aye.

Those opposed no.

The ayes have it.

The Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security's Rules and Procedures and Statement of Policy for Private Immigration Bills and the Policy of the Granting of Federal Charters are adopted.

Now, we will -- I will allow our clerk to go wherever she wants to go, and then the witnesses can come up.

[Whereupon, at 1:12 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]